THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (b) The India-US Trade Policy Forum, which had its first meeting in New Delhi on November 12, 2005, has been designed to act as a forum for taking up issues relating to the expansion of bilateral trade and investment relations between India and the United States. Issues relating to *inter-alia,* the Non-Tariff barriers faced by Indian exports to the US were taken up for discussion during the meeting of the Forum. A doubling of bilateral trade in about three years' time was also discussed in the meeting.

(c) The present bilateral trade between India and the US is as under:

(ln US$ million)

Year	Bilateral Trade
2004-05	20,104.66
April-Aug, 2005	8,763.47

Exemption of agricultural commodities from Export Cess

3052. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to exempt all agricultural commodities from the levy of Export Cess; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANOOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government has approved a proposal for removal of cess on export of agricultural commodities presently levied under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) Cess Act, 1985; Tobacco Cess Act, 1975; Spices Cess Act, 1986; Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) Act, 1972 and Coffee Act, 1942. A Bill for amending/ repealing these Acts, administered by the Department of Commerce, has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha.